

Open Defecation-Free India by 2019: How Villages are Progressing?

Sir,

The goal of Swachh Bharat Mission is to achieve clean and open defecation-free India by October 2, 2019.^[1] One of the objective is to construct 100% toilets for each household of the country. Toilets are not only sanitation and health issue but also privacy, dignity, climatic, and economic issue. 6th goal of sustainable development goals is “ensure access to water and sanitation for all.”^[2] According to a JMP WHO/UNICEF report 2017, 5 billion means 68% of the global population used a basic sanitation.^[3] In India, 626 million people who practice open defecation as per WHO factsheet 2012. This account for 90% of the 692 million people in South Asia who practice open defecation and 59% of the 1.1 billion people in the world who practice open defecation live in India.^[4]

On October 2, 2014, Swachh Bharat Mission was launched throughout country with an aim to achieve the vision of a “Clean and Open Defecation-Free India” by October 2, 2019. A clean India would be the best tribute India could pay to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150 birth anniversary in 2019 said by Indian Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi. We grabbed this opportunity and did small experiment at village level.

As a part of the village adoption program, village Bahadarpur of Rural Health Training Center was adopted by our department in Sankheda taluka of Chhotaudepur district. The family survey was initiated in the village in November 2014 where we found that of total 962 households, 384 (39.91%) did not have toilet and were practicing open defecation.

To implement Swachh Bharat Mission in Bahadarpur village, we continuously sensitized people about benefit of cleanliness, benefit of using toilet instead of open defecation, detail about government subsidiary to construct toilet, conducted rally of school children, awareness about hygiene and sanitation, pamphlets distribution, stakeholders awareness, etc., between the year 2015 and 2017. These affords were in addition and synergistic effect to government and other NGO work in same area.

After extensive efforts of behavior change communication activities among people, we conducted rapid survey for open defecation practice in the Bahadarpur village during August 2017. Our team visited all 384 households where toilet was not reported in 2014 survey. In the current survey, it was observed that out of 384 households, 303 households constructed new toilet in their houses between 2014 and 2017, while the rest of 81 households still practicing open defecation. Thus, in Bahadarpur village, out of 962 households, only 81 (8.41%) households do not have toilet and practice open defecation.

Within span of 3 years, 32.5% increase in number of people using toilets in village.

The study tried to find the reasons for practicing open defecation from those households who are still practicing it. In the follow-up study, it was revealed that financial constraint (72, 88.40%), waiting for government assistance (41, 50.72%), majority of time stay away from home due to labor work (21, 26.08%), and habitual to go outside (19, 23.18%) were the major reasons for open defecation. The present study results are in contrast to study done by Banerjee,^[5] in which most common reason for open defecation was space constraints (86.27%), followed by money constrains (67.64%), and accustomed to old habit (50.98%). In the present study, result space constrains was not important reason for open defecation practice. This difference might be due to difference in geographical area of both studies.

Although the study was done limited to one small village, the results were encouraging. Study supports the impact of Swachh Bharat on ground. If each medical college, do the small evaluation of such availability of toilet in their rural health training area and urban health training area, it will reflect the scenario of country. As on today, Swachh Bharat Mission is reporting 11 states and 314 districts of country are open defecation free.^[1] For healthy future, we all need to walk together and achieve Open Defecation-Free India by 2019.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank Sumandeep Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), Piparia.

Financial support and sponsorship

This study was financially supported by Sumandeep Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), Piparia.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

Jay Patwa, Niraj Pandit

Department of Community Medicine, SBKS MIRC, Sumandeep Vidyapeeth, Vadodara, Gujarat, India

Address for correspondence: Dr. Niraj Pandit,

Department of Community Medicine, SBKS MIRC, Sumandeep Vidyapeeth, Piparia, Vadodara, Gujarat, India.
E-mail: drniraj74@gmail.com

REFERENCES

1. About Us Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. Available from: <http://www.swachhbharatmission.gov.in/SBMCMS/about-us.htm>. [Last cited on 2018 Feb 20].
2. Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation. UNDP. Available from: <http://>

www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-6-clean-water-and-sanitation.html. [Last cited on 2018 Feb 20].

3. Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation, 2017 Update and SDG Baseline. WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP). Available from: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2017/launch-version-report-jmp-water-sanitation-hygiene.pdf>. [Last cited on 2018 Feb 20].
4. WHO Fast Facts. WHO. Available from: http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/monitoring/jmp2012/fast_facts/en/. [Last cited on 2018 Feb 20].
5. Banerjee AB. A study of open air defecation practice in rural Nandivargam village. *Int J Bioassays* 2013;2:1051-4.

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

Access this article online

Quick Response Code:



Website:

www.ijcm.org.in

DOI:

10.4103/ijcm.IJCM_83_18

How to cite this article: Patwa J, Pandit N. Open defecation-free India by 2019: How villages are progressing?. *Indian J Community Med* 2018;43:246-7.

Received: 27-03-18, **Accepted:** 24-07-18

© 2018 Indian Journal of Community Medicine | Published by Wolters Kluwer - Medknow

OBITUARY

Dr. Mihir Gajendran Goswami, a life member of IAPSM, last served as Associate Professor at the GMERS Medical College Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Born on 23/04/1972, he completed his MBBS & MD (PSM) from B.J. Medical College, Ahmedabad. He left for the heavenly abode on 19/05/2018, following multi organ failure.

Dr. Grishma Dixit, a life member of IAPSM and 3rd year MD (Community Medicine) student of B J medical College, Ahmedabad left this world on 20th February 2018 in an unfortunate road traffic accident. Born on 8th August 1990 in Bharuch (Gujarat), she completed her MBBS from Government Medical College, Surat in 2013 and worked as a Medical Officer for a brief period with state health department prior to joining MD.

IAPSM & IJCM deeply mourn their untimely deaths and pray the almighty to give strength to the bereaved families and friends to withstand the loss.